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STRANGE

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NEWS

FROM

West-Smithfield

OR, THE

MAN-CHILD

OF

MANCHESTER.

BEING

Bennet (C.)  
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A true and impartial Account of the prodigious Knowledge and Elocution of a Male-Infant, of three years of age, newly brought up to the Bear-Inn in *Smithfield*; who at his first speaking, corrected his Father as he was reading in the Bible, and at the same time discovered his ability to discourse in *Latine*, *Greek*, and *Hebrew*, together with his desire of seeing his Majesty, to whom he had three words to speak.

LONDON, Printed in the Year, 1679. 24

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1852

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W. E. V. S.

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three years of Age, newly brought up to the *Bear-  
Inn* in *West-Smithfield*.

SO Miraculous is the ensuing Narrative,  
that perhaps, it will scarce meet with  
Belief enough to entertain it, among  
those at least, who are unwilling to believe

any other Deity than Nature: Yet such is the Truth of the Contents, and so lively an Instance is it of an Omnipotencey, that we should be injurious to the ensuing Ages, if we should not transmit the present Account to Posterity. The whole of the Truth is this, That *Charles* the Son of *Philip Bennet*, of *Manebester* in *Lancashire*, who was born about the middle of *June*, which was in the year of our Lord God 1676. was by his Parents looked upon ever since as a Child of no more than ordinary Capacity; his forwardness and the Endowments of Nature appeared in him not so great as to be admired, nor so mean as to be repined at; Nor was there any observation to be made of extraordinary Maturity in the Child, till about a Month or two ago, when his Father being according to his usual and commendable Custome, Reading to his Family in the Bible, and indeed misreciting one Sentence, the Child of a sudden broke out into these words: Father you read wrong, for it is not so in the Scripture: whereat the Father being wrapt in Amazement, as well he might, having never heard the Child speak before) began, after some Recollection of himself.



himself, to examine the place of Scripture which he had then read in the Childs hearing, and found (according to the Childs words) that it was otherwise written than he had read it. Hereupon his wonder encreased, and he asked the Child how he could know what was in the Bible, who replied, he not only had it in his Memory, but that could read it in the Bible, not only in *English* but *Latine*, and further told his Father, that he could speak *Greek* and *Hebrew*, and after all added, that he had three words which he must speak to the King. Hereupon the Parents as soon they could raise money to bring them up, caused the Child to be brought up by one Mr. Bass the younger, Carrier of *Tenworth* in *Warwick-shire*, who lodges at the *Bear and Ragged Staff* in *West-Smithfield*, who thither brought the Child on *Saturday* the 28th day of this instant *June*, where Innumerable multitudes came on *Saturday* night and all *Sunday*, to see this Child, and hear him speak, where several of good Quality obtained the favour of the house, and not only saw the Child, but discoursed with him, and upon Examination, found that he made very ready and apposite Answers to several Questions which they asked him, as well in *Latine* and *Greek*, as in *English*. The Child is very small for his Age, of a round Visage, and black brown Hair: his Father is a Linnen-weaver in *Manchester*, but of low Fortune, therefore whereas it is objected by some, that his Father might have been used to repeat several Sentences of *Latine* and *Greek* in the Childs hearing, and thereby (*Psittacimore*) the Child might learn to pronounce them, we have reason to believe the contrary, in regard that one of so mean Ed-

cation and inferiour Calling, could hardly be capable of teaching another in those Languages of which it is strongly to be presumed that he himself was ignorant.

This Child persisted all *Sunday* in Expressions of his earnest desire to see the King, and speak his three Words to him, *after which*, (said the Child) *I shall live but nine Days, and they being finished, I expect to dye.*

His Majesty having Information hereof was pleas'd this *Monday* Morning to send his Messenger for the Child, who from the *Bear-Inn* immediately carried the Child away in a Coach to *White-Hall*, and though His Majesty had intended this Day to have gone to *Windsor*, yet 'tis said he deferr'd the same till to Morrow; and ('tis thought by many) upon this very occasion, as being desirous to hear what the Child had to say to  
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Several People have endeavoured to tempt the Child with Money to impart to them what words he has to say to the King, but the Child refuses to disclose it to any, nay even to his own Father. Nor will the Child accept of either Silver or Gold from any upon whatsoever Account it be offered to him; and if any one chance to thrust it into his hand, he straightway throws it over his Head, in Token of his Contempt of their Offers; but the Parents however are not of the same mind in that, but retain whatever any shall freely present them with, as knowing that their Circumstances in the World are low, and that the curiosity of others may without injustice be expected to defray the Expences of their Journey up to *London*.

The Child is very remarkable for the quickness of his Eye, which shews as if it were transparent, and darts a piercing and sprightly Ray upon all things. The Parents, between Love and Fear, know not what to think of their Child, nor how to demean themselves towards it; one while his early and extraordinary Maturity gives them hope of Gain and Preferment; another while it raises their fear of loosing their Child, whose extraordinary Qualifications hath engaged their extraordinary love, and the more does the fear of loosing him oppress them, in that the Child so particularly points out the number of the days of his life after his 3 words spoken.



